

TPO Air Quality Newsletter

Volume 1

May, 2001

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This is our first newsletter about Transportation Air Quality and Conformity issues. Beginning this month the Transportation Planning Office will be publishing this newsletter to keep you informed of upcoming and ongoing air quality issues related to our Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and conformity. To assist you in understanding all of the ongoing and upcoming issues in air quality, live Internet Links will be posted throughout this article to inform you of the background reference material and for further information.

MOBILE6 Air Quality Modeling Package Released

This is a busy time for air quality issues. EPA is releasing their new software for air quality modeling at the time of this writing. Called MOBILE6, this software takes into account new emissions factors from truck and passenger vehicles that will result from new fuel standards and better future fleet performance. The new model is necessary due to the new lower sulfur standard for gasoline and diesel fuels that will become effective beginning in

2004. The current air quality model (MOBILE5) does not include adjustment factors for the new fuel formulas. Therefore the model would produce higher emission values and make it more difficult for non-attainment and maintenance MPOs to demonstrate conformity in the outlying horizon years of the metropolitan transportation plans and transportation improvement programs. The net result of this new model is that non-Attainment and



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maintenance MPOs will have a little more flexibility in developing their transportation programs.

Mobile Training To Be Available In Seattle

We have received confirmation that EPA HQ, OTAQ will be conducting training for MOBILE6 in Seattle. The training is currently targeted for July 2001. This should be useful information to those of you who have signed up or had planned to sign up for the WESTAR Training in

Salt Lake City. More details will follow in a few weeks.

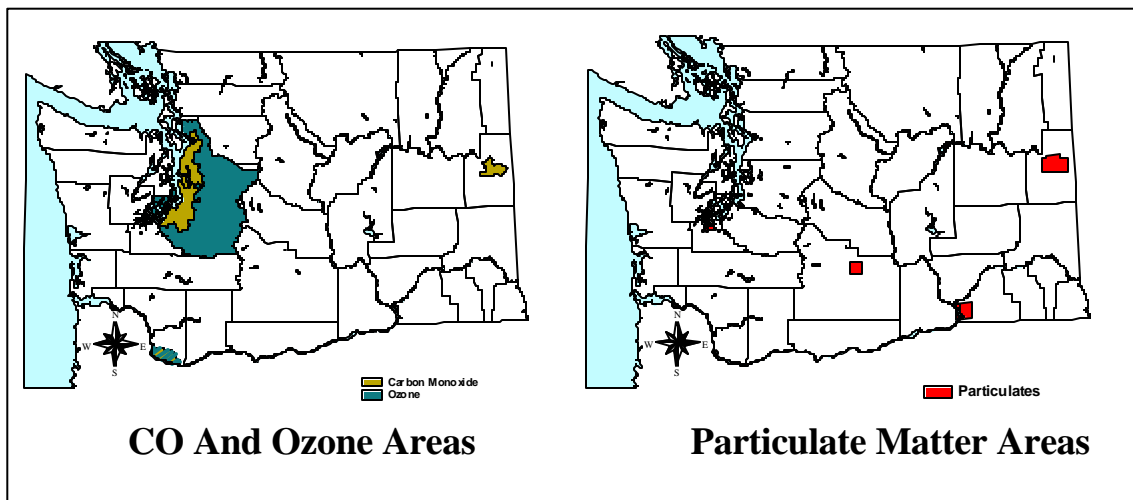
In the meantime, due to current lack of training and unfamiliarity, it is not likely that MOBILE6 will be required for conformity analysis until sometime next year. However, it will likely be available on a voluntary basis.

For reference and background information on these issues, please access the following live Internet Links:

MOBILE6: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/m6.htm>

Fuels: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t1/memoranda/bactguid.pdf>

Current Non-Attainment Areas in Washington



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Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG)

The Yakima Valley COG is performing very well in matters of air quality. Currently there are two criteria pollutants. These include Carbon Monoxide (CO) and Particulate Matter (PM₁₀). The Dept of Ecology in cooperation with the EPA and Yakima is currently in the process of developing a new CO SIP for the Yakima non-attainment area. Approval could occur as soon as this summer (2001). Once approved, Yakima would become a maintenance area for CO and would no longer be required to perform a CO conformity analysis for neither its annual TIP nor comprehensive plan. However, standard hot spot analysis for CO at the project level would still be required before capacity-improving projects could be constructed.

Yakima is currently exploring the possibility of upgrading its current model for PM₁₀ conformity analysis. The WSDOT Planning Office is currently recruiting team members to review the PM₁₀ model for possible improvements.

Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC)

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reclassified Spokane from a moderate to a serious carbon monoxide (CO) non-attainment area on April 12, 1998. This action required that Spokane's SIP be amended to assure that attainment could be achieved and maintained. Currently under revision,

EPA approval of the new Spokane SIP is expected by late summer of 2001. The approval date required to avoid the potential implementation of sanctions is October 13, 2001.

The good news in Spokane is that there have been no violations of air quality for over three years. If this record continues, Spokane could be reclassified as a maintenance area for CO soon after approval of their new SIP.

Transportation related emissions of PM₁₀ are under control in the Spokane area. An aggressive program that includes the paving dirt roads and regular street sweeping of sand on freeways and local roads has reduced PM₁₀ emissions in Greater Spokane Region.

Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

Air quality in the PSRC region is looking good. PSRC is now classified as a maintenance area for both CO and Ozone. Because of the new fuel requirements, air quality should be maintained out beyond the horizon years of the current transportation plan.

The new MOBILE6 modeling program will also assure that the plan and TIP will meet the required air quality conformity regulations over the entire 20-year horizon.

In other news, EPA has just approved a redesignation of all three PM₁₀ non-attainment areas within PSRC to maintenance areas. [See Federal



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Register: March 13, 2001 (Volume 66, Number 49) 40 CFR Parts 52 and 81]

Once an area has been redesignated, an air quality-monitoring network must be continued to verify the attainment status of the area. The maintenance plan should contain provisions for continued operation of air quality monitors that will provide such verification

Procedures for estimating motor vehicle emissions are well documented in the maintenance plan. The maintenance plan includes a motor vehicle emissions budget that can be used in conformity determinations for PM₁₀ on future Transportation Improvement Programs and Regional Transportation Plans.

Regional Transportation Council (RTC) - Vancouver

Air quality also remains good within the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Conference. Recent conformity analysis has shown the Portland-Vancouver region approaching the budget limit on Ozone. Again, the new MOBILE6 air quality modeling procedures and new fuel regulations should improve air quality conformity results for the RTC metropolitan transportation plan and TIP as well as concerns about potential violations of the regulations over the next several years.

